

## REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated February 9, 2006. Claims 1, 3 to 7, 9 to 12 and 14 to 18 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 7 and 13 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

As an initial matter, Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that Claims 2, 6, 8, 12, 14 and 18 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1, 3 to 5, 7, 9 to 11, 13 and 15 to 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,028,676 (Nakao). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in Claim 2, and Claim 2 has been canceled. Claim 7 has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in Claim 6, and Claim 6 has been canceled. Claim 13 has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in Claim 14, and Claim 14 has been canceled.

Therefore, Applicant submits that Claims 1, 7 and 13 are now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

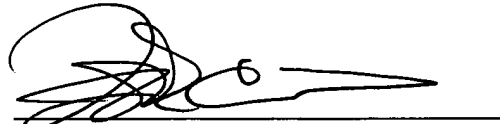
The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Finally, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner acknowledge receipt of the priority documents filed August 27, 2004.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank L. Cire', is written over a horizontal line.

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